2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5



bows and arrows, but I am inclined to think that this must 411
have applied either to a tribe of Fuegians or a party of Pampas living in the valley of the Rio Negro. It is certain that no ancient flint arrow-heads are met with south of the Rio Negro, where they abound; also that there is but little, if any, wood nearer than the Cordillera suitable for bows, and it is reasonable to suppose that previous to the introduction of horses the Indian migrations were confined to a smaller area; besides, although no arrow-heads are found in the interior of Patagonia proper, ancient bolas are not unfrequently met with. These are highly valued by the Indians, and differ from those in present use by having grooves cut round them, and by their larger size and greater weight. The introduction and diffusion of firearms has 713
almost superseded the use of defensive armour; but chain suits, and hide surcoats studded thickly with silver, are still —as instances before given show—possessed and employed: and before going into battle the warriors are often padded like cricketers, coreonillas or saddle-cloths, and ponchos being employed to form a covering, the folds of which will turn a sword cut or lance thrust.

During our long sojourn at Teckel, as hunting was avoided 461
as much as possible, in order to rest the horses, the men occupied themselves in Indian arts and manufacture, some account of which may be deemed interesting.

As the horse is the mainstay of the Indian, let the saddle- 492
gear take precedence. (See figs. 1, 2, 3, 4.)

The saddles are constructed in the following manner. A piece of timber is split in two, and reduced, by means of a small hand-adze, to the requisite size and thickness to form the side boards or flaps, skilfully adapted to the shape of the horse's back; in these boards holes are bored at each end, and the saddle-trees, which are chosen from angular limbs of trees, like knees for boat-building, and reduced to the requisite size, are lashed on by hide. Over this fresh guanaco hide, divested of its woolly coat and carefully cut to the

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terns; make the bolsters of reeds (often also ornamented with silver) to place as a protection for their high saddles, cook the food, smash the marrow-bones and extract the grease; take care of the children, and fetch wood, water and do all the 'chores,' as the Americans say. As may be seen, they are pretty nearly always occupied; nevertheless, they occasionally find time to play cards, and sometimes to squabble and talk scandal.

The children generally employ themselves in imitating their elders. The boys play with miniature bolas, and catch the dogs with small lazos, and the girls construct miniature toldos and sit in them; for this purpose they carry off unchecked anything that may seem suitable. Frequently when about to join the chase I had to interfere with these latter games, and recover my saddle-gear, which had been appropriated by the juveniles.

The musical instruments of the Tehuelches have been previously described. In Teckel, besides the native orchestra (fig. 8) and harmonies, to which one had become accustomed, we furthermore rejoiced in a cornet, with music from which Jackechan's brother frequently enlivened our evenings. Many amongst the Tehuelches could blow the ordinary bugle calls which they had been accustomed to hear when in the Rio Negro or at Punta Arenas; and most of them appeared to possess a good ear for music. Their songs, however, are not melodious, and are mere repetitions of words devoid of all sense or meaning. Casimiro informed me that formerly the old men were in the habit of singing the traditions of the tribe and also some sort of prayer. It is much to be regretted that these customs have fallen into disuse. I tried on various occasions to obtain information about their ancestors, but all my efforts were fruitless. When I asked them how their people travelled before horses came into the country, they could not realise the fact that such was ever the case.

There is little to add to the details already given of the

5: Bourne T-5 (1849) 1874
SH5 Tehuelche SH5



procured weighing each about a pound, connected by a strap or thong of leather, ten or twelve feet long. When engaged in the chase, his horse at his highest speed, the rider holds one ball in his hand, and whirls the other rapidly above his head; when it has acquired sufficient momentum it is hurled with unerring aim at the object of pursuit, and either strikes the victim dead, or coils inextricably about him and roots him to the spot, a helpless mark for the hunter's knife.

This tribe numbered about one thousand; the chief is the acknowledged head of the people. Whether his power was hereditary or elective, I could not learn; but incline to the belief that it was hereditary, as it appeared to be, in his theory at least, absolute. In all questions of importance his decision is final; yet his subjects take considerable liberty with his opinions, sometimes oppose his counsels, and even question his authority. On the appearance of such democratic symptoms, he sometimes finds it necessary to assert his sovereignty with spirit, and brandishes his cutlass smartly before their eyes.

The habits of the people are not only filthy, but indolent to the last degree; exertion of body or mind is their greatest dread. They never go on a hunting expedition till there is nothing more to eat, nor even then till they feel the spur of extreme hunger. It sometimes happens that at such a crisis a storm comes on, which shuts them in; and it is no unfrequent occurrence for them, under such circumstances, to pass two or three days without tasting food. They learn nothing by experience; the same childish indolence and recklessness, followed by the same painful consequences, are continually recurring.